The only evidence I have of an alternative foodplant was the discovery of a single larva feeding on *Eriophorum angustifolium* at a site in South Yorkshire. However they are known to feed on a number of species of grass in captivity. – T. M. MELLING, Brooklands, 206 Chorley New Road, Heaton, Bolton, Lancs BL1 5AA.

A NOTE ON BREEDING ANAGRUS ENSIFER DEBOUCHE (HYM.: MYMARIDAE). – On the 2nd of April 1982 I collected about 300 stems of *Juncus effusus* from Hengistbury Head, Bournemouth, Dorset. I spent the next two days slitting them open with a razor blade and found about 100 eggs of a species of Homoptera. The eggs were transparant, elongated pear shape. Some of the eggs were clear, others had a yellowish content at the wide end, while others had red dots on either side of the egg. Some of the eggs were parasitised and contained partially developed mymarids with the chitin beginning to form; in others these parasitic imagines were completely developed, lying prone with antennae turned back along their sides. I placed these eggs in petri dishes on blotting paper which I kept dark and moist with distilled water and watched the mymarids at daily intervals. On the 17th of April 1982 I noticed that some of the mymarids had altered their position and the antennae were now bent. I took three eggs to be photographed and upon my return noticed that the heat from the microscope light had appeared to have dried up the eggs, so I laid them in distilled water on a slide ready for dissecting. However, I was called away for a couple of hours and upon my return the mymarids had begun to move again, drawing up their legs in the manner adopted by athletes when limbering up. The most movement was in the head turning from side to side. I placed the slide under the microscope and observed the insect's mandibles being used to bit its way out of the egg. I then found that it was using it's mandibles to roll the egg material into a ball, the mandibles moving like hands carefully rolling and turning the ball, so that it may have been getting sustenance from it. The process of turning the ball took several hours and was quite fascinating to watch. Finally, the insect emerged, head first then the antennae followed by the front legs and so on. At this stage the egg-ball was disposed of and once clear of the egg the mymarid proceeded to flick it's wings, stretch it's legs and occasionally prance like a young horse. The process had taken about twelve hours. Once it was free I was able to identify it as *Anagrus ensifer*, principally by it's exceptionally long ovipositor. I placed the mymarid in a three by one cm. tube and it survived without nourishment for six days.

When looking through the *Juncus*, I found *Anagrus ensifer* eating it's way through the stem, but could not see any egg ball as witnessed earlier, and I wondered whether this was a substitute for eating it's way out of the stem. Occasionally I found mymarids facing the small end of the host egg. In some eggs there were as

many as six mymarids, in others two, three and four. The last that emerged were invariably of smaller stature and failed to survive. I watched one *ensifer* after making frantic attempts in search of an oviposit situation, oviposit in an egg already carrying several partially developed mymarids. – GEOFFREY VASSIE, F.R.E.S., 40 Cranleigh Gardens, Southbourne, Bournemouth, Dorset.

A YEAR TO REMEMBER FOR SUGARING ENTHUSIASTS. – The mid-summer of 1982 was notable for a prolific number of humid, thundery nights without the honeydew which often makes sugaring futile. Rumours of the Heart Moth (*Dicycla oo* L.) being common in Ashtead Common, Surrey made me decide to try its old haunts at Ruislip Woods, Middlesex, as it had not been found commonly there for a long time.

The night of 13th July followed a sultry breathless day with dim reverberating rumbling of thunder from all about, but no special direction. A fine line of about 40 perimeter oaks to Copse Wood were duly sugared 15 minutes before dusk. The concoction was from a pound each of black treacle and sand sugar with ½ pint water to dilute and laced with stale beer. Even as the nectar was laid out, noctuae started to buzz expectantly round the treat.

Maybe I was too late in the evening or in the year, but either way no *D. oo* graced my sugar. However I was startled to see a large, oval, seething pale ring of noctuae shoulder to shoulder to get at the sugar, with the weaker non-footballers barged to the ground below, where they soon discovered drops that had run off the trunk. 143 individuals were counted on one patch and 131 on another, the majority being Dunbar (*Cosmia trapezina* L.) with four of the blackish ab. *nigra* form. The wine-red and light ochreous speckled forms of the Suspected (*Parastichtis suspecta* Hbn.) were welcome as were the following:– (approximations) 3,500 Dunbar, 200 each of Copper Underwing (*Amphipyra* sp.), Dark Arches (*Apamea monoglypha* Hufnagel) and Large Yellow Underwing (*Noctua pronuba* L.), 100 Light Arches (*Apamea lithoxylaea* D. & S.), 50 each of Marbled Minor species (*Procus* sp.) and Small Angle Shades (*Euplexia lucipara* L.), 30 Suspected (*P. suspecta*), 20 each of the Bird's wing (*Dypterygia scabriuscula* L.), Double Square-spot (*Amathes triangulum* Hufnagel) and Smoky Wainscot (*Mythimna impura* Hbn.), 10 Old Lady (*Mormo maura* L.) and Dingy Shears (*Enargia ypsillon* D. & S.), five Heart and Dart (*Agrotis exclamationis* L.), three Dusky Brocade (*Apamea remissa* Hbn.), two Slender Brindle (*Apamea scolopacina* Esper) and one each of Shoulder-striped Wainscot (*Mythimna comma* L.), Grey Arches (*Polia nebulosa* Hufn.) and Double Dart (*Graphiphora augur* Fab.).

I was fortunate to take two *oo* at sugar in Surrey and, on 16th July, in half an hour, eleven Light Crimson Underwing (*Catocala promissa* D. & S.) came to sugar in a well known locality, mainly in mint condition. A fortnight later on a night of few moths, a